

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MUSCAT 1561

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR MU US SA YS
SUBJECT: VIEW OF OMAN FOREIGN MINISTRY POLITICAL DIRECTOR ON PDRY

1. DEPTOFF GERLACH AND DCM CALLED DEC 13 ON SALIM AHMAD KHALFAN, POLITICAL DIRECTOR AT FOREIGN MINISTRY. DURING DISCUSSION OF OMAN-PDRY RELATIONS, KHALFAN EXPRESSED VIEW THAT LEADERSHIP OF PDRY HAD NOT SUBSTANTIALLY CHANGED ITS HOSTILITY TOWARD OMAN, DESPITE SAUDI DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE. HOWEVER, HE ACKNOWLEDGED SAUDI EFFORTS MIGHT HAVE HAD SOME BENEFICIAL EFFECT. SAUDIS HAD INFORMED OMANGOV, HE SAID, THAT ADEN GAVE CONCRETE ASSURANCES OF MODERATION TOWARD OMAN AS PRICE OF SAUDI FRIENDSHIP. SAUDIS SEEMED SATISFIED THESE ASSURANCES WERE GENUINE, BUT OMANIS TAKING WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE.

2. KHALFAN DESCRIBED ADEN RULERS AS "GOOD ACTORS" PLAYING TWO-FACED GAME, TAKING SIDE OF RADICAL ARAB AND SOVIET MENTORS WHILE TELLING OIL-RICH ARAB CONSERVATIVES THAT THEY INTEND TO BE RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT WORTHY OF AID. RESULTING DIPLOMATIC TUG-OF-WAR FOR PDRY ALLEGIANCE HE LIKENED TO A LENGTHY SPORTING MATCH OF UNCERTAIN OUTCOME. IN THIS CONTEXT, HE EXPRESSED PERSONAL VIEW THAT USG SHOULD NOT "WATCH
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ON THE SIDELINES" BUT SHOULD ACTIVELY SEEK TO ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH ADEN. THIS WOULD STRENGTHEN THE FRIENDLY TEAM AND MAKE THE FINAL SCORE OF THE MATCH MORE FAVORABLE. HE STRESSED THAT THIS IS HIS OWN OPINION, NOT NECESSARILY THAT OF OMANGOV. GERLACH NOTED THAT USG POLICY TOWARD PDRY IS CURRENTLY A MATTER OF MUCH DEBATE IN WASHINGTON AND THANKED KHALFAN FOR

GIVING US HIS VIEW.

3. COMMENT: WHILE KHALFAN'S SUPERIORS IN FOREIGN MINISTRY
(ZAWAWI AND ALAWI) HAVE OCCASIONALLY ASKED IF USG IS CONTEM-
PLATING STEPS TO RE-ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE IN ADEN,
NEITHER HAS SUGGESTED THEY THOUGHT WE SHOULD DO SO. WE
SUSPECT THEIR ATTITUDE ON THIS ISSUE MAY DIFFER CONSIDERABLY
FROM KHALFAN'S.
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